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THE STORY OF  
David G. Farragut

FOR YOUNG READERS



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BY

MABEL BORTON BEEBE

WERNER SCHOOL BOOK COMPANY

CHICAGO

NEW YORK

BOSTON



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*D. E. Farnagut*



# THE STORY OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT.

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## I.—CHILDHOOD.

On July 5, 1801, in a rude cabin in Eastern Tennessee, David Glasgow Farragut was born.

It was a wild and lonely place. For miles around the little farm, nothing could be seen but woods. Few sounds could be heard save the singing of birds and sometimes the cries of wild beasts.

There was already one child in the family, a boy, whose name was William.

George Farragut, the father, was a brave man. He was a Spaniard, and had come to America during the Revolutionary War.

He was a lover of liberty, and for that reason he had taken up arms with the colonists to help them win their independence from England.

After the close of the war, he had married a hardy frontier girl, and had come to this wild place to make his home.

His life on the little clearing in the backwoods was one of toil and frequent hardships. Every day he was busy chopping down trees, planting crops, or hunting in the great forest.

The young wife, Elizabeth, was also busy, keeping her house and spinning and making the clothes for herself, her husband, and her children.

Little David Farragut grew strong very fast.

He and William had no playmates, but they liked to run about under the trees. They could not go far from the cabin, however, as there were both wild beasts and Indians in the woods.

Sometimes the father would be away for several days, hunting wild game for the family to eat. At such times, the mother and children would be left alone.

One day a band of Indians came and tried to enter the cabin. The mother sent the boys into the loft, where they crouched down close to the roof and kept very still. Then, for hours, she

guarded the door with an axe, until, at last, something frightened the Indians and they went away.

When little David was about seven years old, his father was appointed by the government to command a gunboat on the Mississippi. As his headquarters were to be at New Orleans, the family moved to a plantation on the banks of Lake Pontchartrain. This lake is near the city.

When not on duty on the gunboat, George Farragut was very fond of sailing on the lake. He had a little sailboat in which he would take the children, even in severe storms.

Sometimes the weather would be so bad that they couldn't come home; and then they would sleep all night on the shore of some island. The father would wrap the children in a sail, or cover them with dry sand to keep them warm.

One day a neighbor told him that it was dangerous to take the children on such trips. George Farragut replied, "Now is the time to conquer their fears."

When fishing in the lake one morning, George

Farragut saw a boat in which there was an old man all alone. Pulling alongside, he found that the stranger had become unconscious from the heat of the sun.

He was taken to the Farragut home, and, although he was nursed for some time with the greatest of care and everything was done for him that could be done, yet he grew no better.

Finally Mrs. Farragut also was taken very ill, and in a few days both she and the stranger she had nursed so tenderly, died. This was a sad day for the family of George Farragut.

Not long after the funeral, a stranger called at the Farragut house. He said that his name was David Porter and that he was the son of the old gentleman who had died there. He thanked George Farragut for his kindness to his father, and offered to adopt one of the Farragut boys.

There were now five children in the family, and David's father was very glad to accept this offer. The oldest son, William, already had a commission as midshipman in the navy, and so it was decided that David should be the one to go.

Captain Porter was at that time the commander of the naval station at New Orleans. His handsome uniform, with its belt and shining buttons, seemed very attractive to little David, and he was eager to go with his new guardian.

David spent a few months with the Porter family in New Orleans. Then Captain Porter took him to Washington and placed him in school there.

One day David was introduced to a great man, the Secretary of the Navy. He asked the boy many questions, and was so pleased with his intelligent answers that he said to him, "My boy, when you are ten years old I shall make you a midshipman in the navy."

This was a proud moment for little David Farragut. The great man did not forget his promise. The appointment came six months before the time that was named. It was arranged that the lad should go with Captain Porter in the frigate *Essex*.

It was several months, however, before the vessel was ready to sail. In the meantime, David attended a school in Chester, Pennsylvania.

## II.—THE LITTLE MIDSHIPMAN.

For a long time England had been at war with France. British men-of-war and privateers were in the habit of attacking any vessel going to or from the ports of France. More than this, the British government claimed the right to search American vessels to see whether any English sailors were on board.

Nor was this the worst. Numbers of American seamen were falsely accused of being English deserters, and every year many were taken from their own vessels and forced to serve on British ships.

The Americans tried to induce the British government to cease this unjust treatment. They tried to settle the matter peaceably, but the British were haughty and overbearing and would not agree to give up any of their claims.

On June 18, 1812, things had gone so far that our country was obliged to declare war against Great Britain. A squadron was fitted out and ordered to cruise along the Atlantic coast, in order to protect American vessels from the British.

Captain Porter's vessel, the *Essex*, was to be one of this fleet. It was not ready, however, to sail with the others; but orders were given that it should follow as soon as possible and join the squadron in the Atlantic.

If Captain Porter could not find the squadron, he was to do whatever he thought best.

On October 28, 1812, the *Essex* sailed down the Delaware River, and through the bay into the ocean. There was a pennant flying from the mast-head on which were the words, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." It was for these things that Captain Porter was ready to fight. By his side stood the little midshipman, David Farragut, in his shining uniform. There was no prouder boy in all America than he was on that day.



CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER.

For several months, Captain Porter cruised about the Atlantic. He captured several English

vessels, and then, as he could not find the American squadron, he decided to make a trip around Cape Horn, and cruise in the Pacific.

The passage around Cape Horn is one of the most dangerous in the world, but Captain Porter was not afraid. The *Essex* was one of the best ships in the navy, and the crew had been drilled very thoroughly.

Sometimes Captain Porter sounded a false alarm of fire on shipboard. This was to test the courage of the men and prepare them for accidents. Sometimes he even caused a smoke to be made. The sailors soon became so accustomed to a cry of "Fire" that it caused no confusion.

The courage of the crew was severely tried in going around Cape Horn. The weather was bitterly cold, and for twenty-one days the ship was buffeted by furious storms.

By this time the provisions were almost gone. Each man had but a small daily allowance of bread and water. Little David Farragut was having his first real experience as a sailor.

From Cape Horn, Captain Porter sailed north



along the west coast of South America, and stopped at an island near the coast of Chili. The sailors went on shore with their guns and killed some wild hogs and horses. They were in such need of fresh meat that they ate even the flesh of the horses with great relish.

For months the *Essex* cruised about in the beautiful Pacific. Captain Porter captured several English vessels, and warned American whaling-ships of danger. Some of these had been at sea for many months and had not heard of the war.

Sometimes the *Essex* would stop at an island, and the crew would go on shore to kill seals; sometimes they would anchor in shallow bays and fish for cod.

On one solitary island there was a strange post-office, a box nailed to a tree. Here passing vessels would leave messages and letters, to be taken up by other vessels that chanced to be going in the right direction.

The *Essex* stopped at this island for some time. The crew found prickly pears to eat. They killed

pigeons, which the cook made into pies, and they made soup of the turtles they caught. Those were great days for David Farragut.

The *Essex* finally left this island in May, 1813. Soon more English vessels were sighted and captured. One of these was to be taken to Valparaiso, and Captain Porter put David Farragut in charge of it. The young commander was then but twelve years of age.

The gray-haired English captain was very angry at having to take orders from a boy. He tried to ignore David, and when he failed in this, attempted to frighten him. He threatened to shoot any man who obeyed David's orders, and went below for his pistols.

David knew that the American sailors were loyal to him. So he sent word to the captain that if he did not obey, he would have him thrown overboard.

After this there was no more trouble. David brought the vessel into the port of Valparaiso in safety. He soon afterward rejoined the *Essex*.

Captain Porter now decided to go to some

islands far out in the Pacific, where he could refit the ship.

As the *Essex* approached one of these islands, she was met by a canoe filled with natives. The bodies of these people were tattooed, and they were gayly ornamented with feathers. They invited the sailors on shore, and promised to give them fruit and provisions.

During the six weeks that were occupied in refitting the ship, the sailors rested on the island. David and the other boys of the crew were given lessons by the ship's chaplain each day, and when school hours were over, they were allowed to visit the islanders.

The young natives taught the American boys many things. They showed them how to walk on stilts, and how to use a spear skillfully and with ease. Best of all, they taught them how to swim. The people of this island could swim as easily as they could walk. Even the babies could float in the water like ducks.

The *Essex* left this island in December, 1813, and sailed for Valparaiso.

## III.—THE LOSS OF THE ESSEX.

One day in the following February, two English war vessels appeared in the harbor of Valparaíso. The *Essex* was lying quietly at anchor, and many of her crew were on shore.

The British vessels bore down upon the *Essex* in a very hostile manner. Captain Porter was afraid they would attack him. They had no right to do this, for Chili was not at war with either England or America.

One of these British vessels was a frigate called the *Phoebe*. The other was a sloop named the *Cherub*. The *Phoebe* approached the *Essex* until she was within fifteen feet of her side.

Captain Porter, standing on the deck, hailed, saying: "If you touch a single yardarm, I shall board you instantly!" The *Phoebe* passed by with no reply.

After this, the British vessels anchored at the entrance of the harbor. They could thus keep the *Essex* a prisoner.

The vessels remained in this position for several weeks. On the 28th of March, a furious gale

sprang up. The cables of the *Essex* gave way, and she began to drift out toward the English vessels. Captain Porter now made a desperate effort to escape. He set all sails and made for the open sea.

Suddenly something snapped. The main topmast came crashing down, carrying sails, rigging, and some of the crew into the water. In this disabled condition escape was impossible. The *Essex* was driven toward the shore and was finally brought to anchor within pistol shot of the beach.

The *Essex* had but four guns that would shoot as far as the cannon of the English. The *Phoebe* and the *Cherub* took a position out of range of nearly all the *Essex* guns, and then poured broadside after broadside into the unfortunate vessel.

Captain Porter and his gallant crew fought against these odds until one hundred and twenty-four of the men had been killed or wounded. Then the *Essex* surrendered.

During all this dreadful battle there was no braver officer than the little midshipman, David

Farragut. Sometimes he was carrying messages for the captain; again, he was bringing powder for the guns.

Once when going down the hatchway a wounded man fell upon him. David barely escaped being crushed to death.

Captain Porter was so pleased with his conduct that he mentioned his bravery in his official dispatches to the government.

After the surrender the wounded were removed to shore. David offered his services to the surgeons. He worked early and late, preparing bandages and waiting upon the injured men.

In speaking of this afterward, he said, "I never earned Uncle Sam's money so faithfully."

The British put all the American prisoners on board an unarmed vessel, and made them promise that they would not take up arms against the English until they had been exchanged for an equal number of English prisoners.

After this the Americans were allowed to sail for the United States. They arrived in the harbor of New York on July 7, 1814.

## IV.—THE TRIP ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Although a prisoner of war, David Farragut was glad to get back to the United States.

While waiting to be exchanged he attended a school in Chester, Pennsylvania.

It was a strange school. The pupils had no books. The teacher, Mr. Neif, told them the things he wished them to learn, and the boys wrote them down in notebooks. They would sometimes be examined on these notes to see whether they had paid proper attention.

In the afternoons, Mr. Neif would take the boys for long walks. They made collections of minerals and plants, and learned many curious and useful facts about them.

Mr. Neif, who had been a soldier, gave the boys military drill. He also taught them to swim and climb.

David Farragut was not a handsome boy. But people liked to look at him, for his face was honest and good. He was short for his years, but he stood very erect, and held his head as high as he could.

“I cannot afford to lose any of my inches,” he said.

In November, 1814, the British and the Americans made an exchange of prisoners, and David Farragut was now free to return to the navy. As a treaty of peace was made a few weeks later, he did not have to serve against the British.

During the next two years, David made but one short cruise. He was quartered, the rest of the time, on a receiving ship. This is a vessel stationed at the navy yards, where recruits are first received into the service.

In the spring of 1816, David went on a cruise that proved to be most interesting. He was ordered to the *Washington*, a beautiful new ship of seventy-four guns. This was to carry the American minister to Naples, in Italy.

While waiting at Annapolis for the minister they had a visit from the President, James Madison. Among his suite was Captain Porter, who was then a naval commissioner. He came to say good-bye to David.

The voyage across the Atlantic was one to be



remembered. The captain was very proud of his "crack" ship. He kept the crew so busy cleaning decks and scouring "bright work," that sometimes they had no food for eight hours at a time. Once all the crew were kept on deck for several nights in succession.

During the summer months, the *Washington* cruised about the Mediterranean, stopping at many places. This was a wonderful experience for David. He visited the bay of Naples. The great volcano, Vesuvius, was then in eruption, and the sight of this alone was worth the voyage.

While in the bay, the king of Naples and the emperor of Austria made a visit to the *Washington*, and a grand display was made to entertain them.

The *Washington* stopped at the coast towns of Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers, and finally wintered in a Spanish harbor. The Spaniards were very kind to the captain. They allowed him to use their navy yard, in which to refit his vessel.

During all this cruise, the boys on the ship were taught by the chaplain, Mr. Folsom.

He was very fond of David, and in the autumn of 1817, when he was appointed consul to Tunis, he wrote to the captain of the *Washington* for permission to take David with him.

This request was granted, and David spent a delightful year with his old friend. He studied mathematics and English literature. He also learned to speak French and Italian.

He and Mr. Folsom took many trips about the Mediterranean, and these were of great benefit to him. In October, 1818, he returned to the *Washington*, in which he cruised for another year.

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#### V.—WAR WITH THE PIRATES.

While David Farragut was at a port in the Mediterranean, he was summoned to America to take his examination for the lieutenancy. He was then eighteen years of age.

In November, 1820, he arrived in New York, where he passed his examination successfully. He did not receive any appointment, however, for some time, as there were no vacancies in the navy.

The next two years were spent with the Porter family at Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1822, he sailed for a short time on a sloop of war, that was cruising about the Gulf of Mexico. On his return to America, he learned that Captain Porter was fitting out a fleet to cruise against the pirates of the West Indies.

These robbers had small, fast-sailing ships. They would attack unarmed merchant vessels, seize all the valuables they could carry away, and destroy the remainder. Sometimes they killed the crew; at other times they put them ashore on some desert island.

For years, Americans and English had been waging war against these pirates, but without success. With their small boats the robbers would run into the shallow bays and creeks, where no other vessels could follow them; and so they had grown bolder and bolder every year.

Ever since peace had been declared with England, Captain Porter had been a commissioner of the navy, and had made no sea voyages. But now he offered to resign his position, and drive

the pirates from the sea. He said he would do this upon one condition. He must have a fleet of small vessels that could follow the pirates into their lurking places.

The government accepted his offer, and gave him orders to fit out such a fleet as he chose. He bought eight small schooners similar to those used by the pirates. To these were added five large rowboats or barges, which were called the Mosquito Fleet. David Farragut was assigned to one of the vessels named the *Greyhound*.

This fleet of Captain Porter's had many encounters with the pirates. At one time, when the *Greyhound* was off the southern coast of Cuba, some of the crew went on shore to hunt game, and were fired upon from the thicket by pirates. The Americans returned this fire without effect, and then went back to their ship.

Young Farragut was ordered to take a party of men to capture the pirates, and at three o'clock the next morning they set out in the barges.

After landing, David and his men tried to go around to a point at the rear of the place where

the pirates were supposed to be. This was no easy thing to do. They had to cut their way through thickets of cactus, thorny bushes, and trailing vines. Their shoes were cut from their feet with walking over the sharp rocks; and the heat was so intense that some of the men fainted.

At last they found the pirate camp. It was deserted. The robbers had seen the *Greyhound* and the barges, and had fled to some other hiding place. In the camp, which was protected by several cannon, there were some houses a hundred feet long. There was also an immense cave filled with all kinds of goods taken from plundered vessels.

The sailors burned the houses, and carried the plunder and cannon to their boats. The prize that David himself took away was a monkey, which he had captured after a fierce struggle.

As the sailors were returning to their boats, they heard a great noise in the thicket behind them, and thought that the pirates had come back to attack them. David Farragut made a speech to his men. He urged them to stand their ground and fight

bravely. Imagine their surprise and amusement at finding their foes to be thousands of land crabs, making their way through the briars!

This was only one of many encounters that the Mosquito Fleet had with the pirates. Through all the time, the American sailors suffered much from yellow fever and exposure. David Farragut afterward said: "I never owned a bed during my cruise in the West Indies, but lay down to rest wherever I found the most comfortable berth."

The pirates were finally driven from the seas. Their boats were burned or captured, and their camps destroyed.

While on this cruise, David got leave of absence to visit his sister in New Orleans. She was the only one of the family still living at the old home. It was hard for her to recognize in the stranger the boy who had left home so long before.

When young Farragut was on his way to the north and within sight of Washington, he was taken ill with yellow fever. He had nursed many a poor sailor, and had hitherto escaped the disease.

After a short time spent in a Washington hos-

pital, he was able to return home. Soon afterward, he was married in Norfolk, Virginia, to Susan Marchant. But it was nearly two years before he was entirely well, and strong enough to resume his duties in the navy. In the meanwhile, he and his bride spent much time with the family of Captain Porter.

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## VI.—FROM LIEUTENANT TO CAPTAIN.

In August, 1825, David Farragut at last received his commission as lieutenant. He was ordered on board the ship *Brandywine*, the vessel which was to have the honor of taking the Marquis de Lafayette to France.

This great Frenchman had always been a warm friend of the United States. Fifty years before, he had taken a leading part in the Revolutionary War, and had been one of General Washington's most trusted officers.

After the Revolution, he had returned to his home in sunny France. He had always loved America, and in his old age he felt that he

would like to visit again the great nation which he had helped to establish. So in 1824, though old and gray, he had come back to America as the honored guest of the nation.



LAFAYETTE.

From one end of the land to the other, his tour had been one grand ovation. And now that he was to return home, the good ship *Brandywine* was detailed to carry him safely across the Atlantic.

The voyage was an uneventful one for Lieutenant Farragut. After landing Lafayette in France, the *Brandywine* cruised about the shores of England and in the waters of the Mediterranean for about a year.

On his return to America, Lieutenant Farragut found that his wife was in very poor health, and he obtained leave of absence from the navy, in order that he might take her to a famous doctor in New Haven, Connecticut.

During his stay in that city, he regularly attended the lectures at Yale College, for David



Farragut never wasted an opportunity for self-improvement. When his wife was better, they returned to Norfolk, where he was placed in charge of the receiving ship in the navy yard.

Most of the boys on the ship were uneducated and did not know one letter from another. Lieutenant Farragut therefore established a school on board. This proved to be of great value to these poor boys.

One boy had run away from home to avoid going to school, and he was determined that he would not study. It was only after many severe punishments that he was conquered. When once started in the right direction, he learned rapidly.

One day, seven years afterward, a fine-looking, well-dressed man stopped David Farragut on the street. On being asked his name, the stranger replied, "I have grown probably a foot since we parted, but do you not remember the boy who once gave you so much trouble?"

"Oh yes," said Farragut, "but I should never have recognized him in you."

"Nevertheless," said the stranger, "I am the

same, and am ready to acknowledge you the greatest benefactor and friend I ever had in this world of trouble."

After leaving the receiving ship, Lieutenant Farragut spent the next ten years in short cruises along the South American coast and about the Gulf of Mexico. During all this time his wife was an invalid, and her health continued to fail until her death in 1840.

For two years before her death, Lieutenant Farragut was at home on leave of absence. He could then be constantly with her and wait upon her.

In speaking of his devotion to his wife, a lady in Norfolk said: "When Lieutenant Farragut dies, every woman in the city should bring a stone, and build for him a monument reaching to the skies."

In 1841 promotion came to Farragut, and he received a commission as commander in the navy.

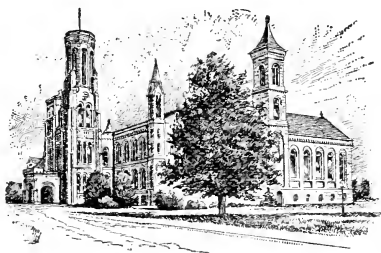
In 1845, the state of Texas was annexed to the United States. This brought about a dispute with Mexico concerning the southwestern bound-

ary of the state, and the result was a short war, in which the Americans were victorious.

Commander Farragut was very anxious to serve his country in this Mexican War, and wrote many letters to the Navy Department, asking for the command of a ship. For a long time he waited in vain. When, at last, a vessel was assigned to him, it was too late for him to do his country any service. The war was about over, and there was no more work for the navy to do.

From 1850 until 1852, he was employed in Washington, drawing up a book of regulations for the navy. As when in New Haven he had attended the lectures of Yale College, so now he attended those of the Smithsonian Institution.

“I have made it a rule of my life to do all things with a view to the possible future. You cannot come away from such lectures without being wiser than



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

when you went in," he said. When the book of regulations was finished, he went back to the navy yard at Norfolk, where he gave a series of lectures on gunnery to the officers.

About this time, England and France were at war with Russia. Farragut applied to Congress for permission to visit the English and French fleets engaged in this war. He wished to see whether he could learn of any improvements that could be made in the American navy.

But Congress had other work for him to do. There was to be a new navy yard built on the Pacific coast, at San Francisco. This would be a difficult task, and one requiring the services of a man having great knowledge and experience. No one was better fitted to undertake it than the lieutenant who had been so eager to make use of every opportunity for improvement.

In August, 1854, he was accordingly sent to California. Some time before this, he had married a second wife, Virginia Loyall, of Norfolk, and she accompanied him to the Pacific coast. There were then no railroads across the great western

plains, and they went by ship to the isthmus of Panama. After crossing the isthmus, they embarked upon a coasting vessel, and sailed to San Francisco.

Commander Farragut spent four years in laying the foundations of what is to-day the great navy yard on Mares Island, about thirty miles from San Francisco.

Before this work was completed he was promoted to the rank of captain. This was, at that time, the highest rank in the United States navy.

In July, 1858, Captain Farragut returned home. He was given, at once, the command of the *Brooklyn*. It had been ten years since he had been on a war vessel, and he found many changes. His ship had steam power as well as sails. It was one of the first steam war vessels built for the navy.

The arrangement of the guns was the same as in the old sailing sloops. But they were much larger, and of different shape. Explosive shells were used instead of solid cannon balls.

The *Brooklyn* cruised for two years in the Atlan-

tic and the Gulf of Mexico. While on this cruise, Captain Farragut again visited New Orleans, for he wished to see his brother who was on duty at the naval station there. A sorrowful welcome awaited him, however, for his brother had died just before his arrival. The captain sadly returned to his ship, and soon afterward sailed home to Norfolk.

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## VII.—THE QUESTION OF ALLEGIANCE.

In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, the United States navy had but ninety vessels of all kinds. Twenty-one of these were not fit for service. Only eleven of those in commission were in American waters. The rest, which were scattered all over the world, were recalled at once.

Some of those in far away ports were commanded by southern captains, and it would take them several months to reach America.

It was feared that they would take their vessels into southern ports, and turn them over to the Confederate government. These fears, however,

were groundless, for all the vessels were safely brought into northern ports. With few exceptions, all the naval officers were loyal to the United States.

Of all these naval officers, none was more loyal than Captain Farragut. In his home in Virginia, he had watched the growing troubles with a sad heart. He was a southerner by birth, and his most tender ties were in Virginia. It was there that he had spent many years with the Porter family, and there he had numerous friends. It was there, also, that he had married and made his home.

He knew that, should war break out, he would be called upon to choose between his friends in the South, and his government in the North.

"God forbid," he said, "that I should have to raise my hand against the South." These very words showed that his decision had been made.

He felt that he owed his first allegiance to the United States government, which had given him his education, employment, and rank. He could not take up arms against the flag of his country. It was under this flag that he had received his first

commission as midshipman. In that proud moment he had taken his oath to die in its defense.

On the ocean, he had seen the proudest colors lowered to the victorious stars and stripes. At Valparaiso, he had stood on the bloody deck of the *Essex*, and had seen men give their lives in order that the flag should not be hauled down. He had traveled from ocean to ocean, and had seen the star spangled banner respected by all nations.

For some weeks before the actual beginning of war, there was much excitement in Norfolk. Every day the men met together in the stores to talk over the latest news, and there were many lively discussions among them. In these meetings, Captain Farragut boldly asserted his loyalty to the government, and this caused him the loss of many of his friends.

One morning, when in discussion with some officers, one of them said to him, "A person of your sentiments cannot live in Norfolk."

"Well, then," he calmly replied, "I can live somewhere else."



He felt that the time for action had come. He went home at once, and told his wife that he was going to "stick to the flag," and that they must move to the North.

With sad hearts, they sailed away from Norfolk.

They went to New York, and made their home on the Hudson, in a town called Hastings.

Even there, Captain Farragut met with a cold reception. The people were suspicious of the southern officer who had come to live among them. They did not consider the great sacrifice that he had made in leaving home and friends.

Determined to do his duty, he wrote to offer his services to the government. Congress could not, at once, accept them. No minor position could be given to Captain Farragut; it must be one full of responsibility.

It was not long, however, until the government had need of his services. The Mississippi River separated two large sections of the southern states, and its control was of the greatest importance to both the North and the South.

At the beginning of the war, all the river from

Cairo, Illinois, to the Gulf, was controlled by the South. The capture of the upper forts in this section was first attempted by the North.

Large armies marched against them by land, and a fleet of river gunboats sailed down from the north to assist them. These gunboats were river steamers which the government had covered with plates of iron and armed with cannon.

While the northern river forts were thus being attacked, an expedition was planned to capture the fortifications near the river's mouth.

The strongest of these were Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. These were between New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico, and their capture would give New Orleans to the North. This was considered a very important undertaking.

After much discussion, the Navy Department decided that Captain Farragut was best fitted to command this expedition. So Commander David D. Porter was sent to Hastings to talk the matter over with him. This commander was the son of the Captain Porter who had adopted David Farragut when a boy.

When Captain Farragut heard of the proposed expedition he was very enthusiastic. He hurried at once to Washington, where he was appointed commander of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron. This was in January, 1862. His orders were to capture Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and take New Orleans.

A few weeks before this an event took place which came near making serious trouble for the United States. The Confederate government had appointed two commissioners, John Slidell and James Mason, to go to England to see if they could not get help from that country.

As it would be dangerous for them to sail in a Confederate vessel, they went to Havana, Cuba, where they took passage in an English vessel named the *Trent*.

Although they had tried to do this very secretly, Captain Wilkes, commanding a warship of the United States, heard about it, and determined to capture these men, if possible. So he pursued the *Trent* and obliged her to stop.

The Confederate commissioners refused to leave

the *Trent*, and, therefore, Captain Wilkes sent an armed force on board and carried them off. He then took them to Boston harbor, where they were imprisoned in a fort of the United States.

This act caused great indignation in England, and it was only through the prompt and wise action of President Lincoln and Congress that war was averted. An apology was made and the Confederate commissioners were allowed to proceed on their voyage without further molestation.

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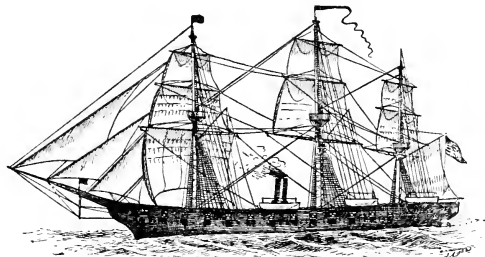
#### VIII.—THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS.

On the 2d of February, 1862, Captain Farragut sailed from Hampton Roads in his flagship, the *Hartford*. This was one of the new sloops of war having both steam and sails.

All the vessels of this expedition were to meet at Ships Island, about one hundred miles from the mouth of the Mississippi. When Captain Farragut arrived there on February 20th, he found only a part of his fleet awaiting him. The other vessels arrived one by one.

This was the most powerful squadron that had ever been under an American commander. It consisted of steam sloops, gunboats, and mortar boats, forty-eight vessels in all.

An army of fifteen thousand men was at hand to assist Captain Farragut. This army had been brought from the North on transports, and was under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler.



THE HARTFORD.

In the channel, at the mouth of the Mississippi, were heavy mud banks, made of deposits brought down by the stream. To take the large vessels over this bar was Captain Farragut's first great task. The water was so shallow that the keels of the ships would sometimes stick in the mud, and then it was with the greatest of difficulty that they could be hauled off.

It was the 18th of April before all the vessels were in the river and ready to attack the forts; and in the meanwhile, a great naval battle had been fought in other waters.

The Confederates had captured the Norfolk navy yard, and with it the United States vessel *Merrimac*, which was there at the time. They removed the masts of this vessel, and then fitted her with an iron prow, and built sloping sides over the deck, covering them with iron rails laid closely together side by side.

Five of the best Northern war vessels lay in the bay outside of the harbor.

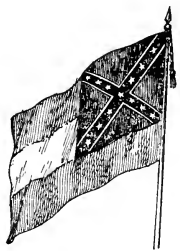
On March 8th, 1862, the *Merrimac* attacked this fleet. She drove her iron prow straight through the side of the *Cumberland*. This vessel sank almost immediately, and but few of the men were saved.

Then the *Merrimac* attacked the *Congress*, drove her ashore, and set her on fire with red hot shot. Meanwhile, broadside after broadside had been fired at the *Merrimac*; but the shot bounded harmlessly from her sloping iron sides.

Night came on, and before attempting to destroy the other three ships, the black monster waited for the daylight.

There was consternation all through the North. How could a stop be made to this fearful work of the *Merrimac*? There was no telling what she might do on the morrow.

That same night there streamed into Chesapeake Bay a queer looking little vessel which had been built by a famous mechanic, Captain John Ericsson. She was named the *Monitor*. She had a low, flat deck, pointed at both



CONFEDERATE FLAG.

ends. In the center was a round, revolving turret. The vessel was completely plated over with iron, and in the turret were two enormous guns, larger than any that had ever been used before.

On the morning of March 9th, when the *Merrimac* steamed out to finish her work of destruction, a stupendous cannon ball came thundering against her black side. As the turret of the little *Monitor* swung round, there came another and

another,—such a battering as never ship's side had felt before that day.

The broadsides returned by the *Merrimac* fell harmlessly on the flat deck and iron turret of the *Monitor*.

This battle lasted for nearly three hours. Neither vessel was injured to any extent. Finally the *Merrimac* withdrew, leaving the *Monitor* in possession of the bay.

In one respect, this was the most wonderful battle ever fought upon the water. It showed to all the nations of the world that new navies must be built. In one day all the war-ships in the world had become old-fashioned. The days for wooden war vessels were over.

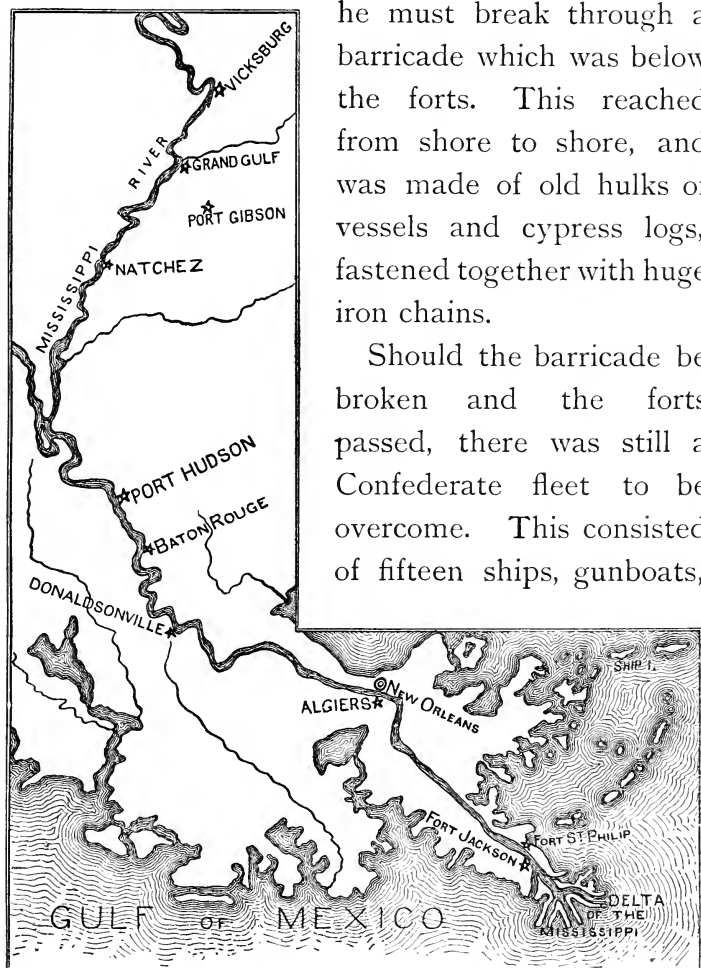
Let us now return to Captain Farragut. As I have said, by the 18th of April he had succeeded in taking all his vessels over the bar of the Mississippi. But still greater difficulties were ahead of him.

Before he could capture New Orleans, he must pass the two forts, Jackson and St. Philip, on opposite banks of the river. First of all, however,



he must break through a barricade which was below the forts. This reached from shore to shore, and was made of old hulks of vessels and cypress logs, fastened together with huge iron chains.

Should the barricade be broken and the forts passed, there was still a Confederate fleet to be overcome. This consisted of fifteen ships, gunboats,



MAP OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI.

and steam rams similar to the *Merrimac*. They were drawn up across the river above the forts. Captain Farragut was not discouraged by any of these things, but began at once to carry out his plans.

All along the banks of the river were thick woods. The forts themselves were almost hidden by the trees. Captain Farragut stationed his mortar boats close to the banks, below the chain barricade; and, in order that they might be better hidden from the forts, large branches of trees had been tied to the tops of the masts.

This mortar flotilla was commanded by Captain Porter. The mortars could throw thirteen-inch shells for a distance of two miles.

Captain Farragut's plan was to send these mortar boats forward to bombard the forts, while the other vessels, breaking through the chains, should sail boldly up the river.

On the morning of April 18th, the shells from the mortars began to rain down upon the forts. For six days and nights this firing never ceased. The answering shots from the forts did but little

harm. The Confederates could not take aim at boats which they could not see.

Meanwhile, two of Captain Farragut's gunboats crept up the river at night, and broke a passage through the chain barricade. Then, on the night of April 23d, the entire fleet sailed through this opening and boldly attacked the forts.

The whole river was at once a scene of confusion. Every gun, both of the forts and of the Confederate fleet, which had hastened down the river, was sending shot and shell into the Union fleet.

The Confederates piled every kind of inflammable material upon huge rafts, set them on fire, and sent them floating down the river. They hoped, in this way, to burn the invading fleet. The river was a blaze of light. The din from the cannon was terrible.

But Captain Farragut and his vessels kept steadily on. They passed the forts, and destroyed or captured every vessel in the Confederate fleet. This was accomplished with the loss of but one ship of the Union squadron.

When the news of this victory reached New Orleans, the whole city was thrown into wild confusion. Men, women, and children rushed to the levee and set fire to the goods there.

Everything that would burn was set on fire, and



GENERAL B. F. BUTLER.

sent down the river to meet the victorious fleet that was coming. Ships loaded with burning cotton, and even a half-finished ram like the *Merrimac* floated down stream, a mass of flames.

About noon on April 25th, the fleet rounded the bend of the river, and came in sight of the city. That

same morning, the mayor of New Orleans had ordered the state flag of Louisiana to be hoisted upon the city hall.

Captain Farragut demanded that this should be hauled down. He also ordered that the stars and stripes should be raised over the buildings belonging to the United States government.

Meanwhile, Commander Porter with his mortar boats had been steadily bombarding Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. On April 28th, these forts surrendered, and the Union forces took possession.

On the following day, the flag of the United States was floating over the city hall of New Orleans. General Butler and his troops took possession of the city on the first of May.

On the 11th of July, on the recommendation of President Lincoln, Congress passed a resolution thanking Captain Farragut for what he had done; and a few days later he was further rewarded by being raised to the rank of rear-admiral.

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## IX.—THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY.

After the capture of New Orleans, Admiral Farragut was ordered at once to proceed up the river. He was to pass, or to attack and capture, all the Confederate forts between New Orleans and Memphis.

But for many reasons, he thought it unwise to attempt this expedition.

The increasing shallowness of the river would make it almost impossible to use his best sea-going vessels. The upper forts were located on high bluffs, and it would be difficult to attack them from the river.



GENERAL N. P. BANKS.

Admiral Farragut knew that, should he be able to pass these forts, or even to silence their guns, he could not hold them without a large land force. But he was too good a soldier to do anything in disobedience to orders.

In the face of all these difficulties, he passed and repassed the forts at Vicksburg and Port Hudson. He made it plain to the Confederates that none of their batteries on the Mississippi could stop the movements of his fleet. But he found, as he had expected, that the forts could not be held until armies came to his assistance.

A large land force under General Grant besieged

Vicksburg until it surrendered on July 4, 1863. Five days later, an army under General Nathaniel P. Banks succeeded in capturing Port Hudson.

These were the last Confederate strongholds on the Mississippi. Their capture gave to the Union forces the entire control of the river.

The command of the Mississippi squadron was given to David D. Porter, who had likewise been rewarded with the rank of rear-admiral. He took charge of all the river boats of the



ADMIRAL DAVID D. PORTER.

fleet, while Farragut, with most of the sea-going vessels, sailed for the Atlantic coast.

These vessels were all in need of repairs. His flagship, the *Hartford*, which was in the best condition of all, had two hundred and forty scars from shot and shell.

After the loss of New Orleans, Mobile was the best Gulf port left to the Confederates. This city

stands at the head of the broad, shallow bay of Mobile, thirty miles from the Gulf.

The entrance to the bay is very narrow, and it was protected by two strong forts,—Fort Morgan on one side, and Fort Gaines on the other.

Admiral Farragut was ordered to capture these forts. This would prevent the South from using the port of Mobile.

On January 18th, 1864, his ships having been repaired, Captain Farragut sailed again into the Gulf of Mexico.

He was anxious to make the attack early in the spring, but it was August before his fleet was ready.

In the meantime, the Confederates had made their fortifications stronger. The only channel through which the vessels could pass was near Fort Morgan. The Confederates strengthened this fort with every defense possible.

A double line of torpedoes, or submarine mines, was stretched across the channel. Above this, lay the Confederate fleet. One of these vessels, the *Tennessee*, was a huge iron ram like the *Merrimac*.



The squadron of Admiral Farragut was a strong one. There were twenty-four wooden war vessels and four ironclads like the *Monitor*.

On the night of August 4th, every preparation was made for the attack. The seamen, with determined faces, gave their messages and keepsakes to their messmates, for they hardly expected to come out of this fray alive.

Admiral Farragut, himself, made all his arrangements for the worst, though hoping for the best. He wrote to his wife, "I am going into Mobile in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will. God bless and preserve you, if anything should happen to me."

At sunrise the fleet moved steadily toward Fort Morgan, the stars and stripes flying from every masthead.

The four ironclads were sent ahead, close to the forts. The wooden war vessels followed, lashed together in pairs. This was done so that if one vessel became disabled it could be towed by the

other. Farragut wished to lead the fleet in his flagship, the *Hartford*, but his officers dissuaded him, and the *Brooklyn* went first, the *Hartford* following.

The admiral climbed up in the rigging, where he could command a view of the entire fleet. As the shells from the forts began to fall about the vessels, he climbed higher and higher, in order to see above the smoke.

Fearing that a shot would cut the ropes, one of his officers climbed up to him and wound a rope around his body. The end of this was secured to the mast.

The ironclad *Tecumseh* was now leading the fleet. Suddenly there was a muffled explosion. The stern of the *Tecumseh* rose out of the water and she plunged bow foremost to the bottom of the channel.

At this, the *Brooklyn* stopped, and with reversed engines began to back water. Admiral Farragut signaled, and asked, "What's the trouble?" "Torpedoes," was the reply.

This was the critical moment of the battle.

The backing of the *Brooklyn* caused confusion among the vessels following so closely upon each other. There was tremendous cheering and firing from the Confederates. They were sure that the victory was theirs.

A signal was made to the *Brooklyn* to go ahead, but she remained motionless.

What should be done? To remain there, under the guns of the fort, with the other vessels coming up behind, was out of the question. Ahead lay the dreaded line of torpedoes. Everything depended upon prompt decision.

Admiral Farragut ordered the *Hartford* to go ahead, "full speed." She passed the *Brooklyn*, and made straight for the mines that had sunk the *Tecumseh*. As they crossed the line of torpedoes, the sailors could hear them grating against the hull of the vessel. None of them exploded, however, and the *Hartford* passed the fatal line in safety.

The effect of this daring deed was wonderful. Men sprang to the guns, and the air was filled with the roar of cannon. The other vessels all

followed the *Hartford* across the torpedoes, into the bay. They then attacked the Confederate fleet, and soon either captured or destroyed all but the ram *Tennessee*. This vessel had taken refuge

under the guns of Fort Morgan.



ADMIRAL BUCHANAN.

Admiral Farragut then anchored about four miles up the bay. While his men were having breakfast the iron ram steamed out boldly from the fort to attack the whole fleet.

Admiral Buchanan, the commander of the Confederate fleet, was a brave officer. Not until after a fierce combat, which lasted over an hour, was he forced to surrender the *Tennessee*.

This ended the battle of Mobile Bay. "It was one of the hardest earned victories of my life, and the most desperate battle I ever fought since the days of the *Essex*," said Farragut.

Not quite three hours had passed from the time

that Fort Morgan fired its first gun until the *Tennessee* surrendered.

With the Confederate fleet destroyed, and Mobile Bay in possession of Farragut, the forts were soon captured.

While Farragut had been winning these victories in the Gulf, a very brilliant naval battle had been fought off the coast of France.

During the whole of the war, England had allowed the Confederates to fit out armed cruisers in her harbors, and to send them out to prey upon the United States commerce. The most famous of these cruisers was the *Alabama*, commanded by Captain Raphael Semmes. For two years this vessel had roamed the sea, burning and destroying nearly forty United States merchantmen, but always eluding the war vessels.



CAPTAIN RAPHAEL SEMMES.

At last, in June, 1864, the United States war

vessel *Kearsarge* discovered this enemy in the harbor of Cherbourg, France. As it would have been against the laws of nations to fight a battle in the harbor, the *Kearsarge* remained outside to prevent the *Alabama* from getting away.

Finally on Sunday, June 19th, the *Alabama* suddenly put to sea and attacked the *Kearsarge*. The vessels were evenly matched.

The battle following was terrific. But the crew of the *Kearsarge* proved to be the better marksmen, and after an hour's furious fighting the *Alabama* suddenly gave a great lurch and plunged to the bottom of the ocean. The crew were picked up by the *Kearsarge* and some English vessels which happened to be near.

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#### X.—WELL-EARNED LAURELS.

After the surrender of the forts, Farragut remained in Mobile Bay until the following November. His health was suffering from his labors and the effects of the southern climate.

At this time, the Navy Department requested

him to take command of an expedition against Fort Fisher. This greatly disturbed him, and he wrote to the Secretary of the Navy that his strength was exhausted.

“I am willing,” he said, “to do the bidding of the government as long as I am able. I fear, however, that my health is giving way. I have now been down to the Gulf five years out of six, and I want rest if it is to be had.”

When the Secretary of the Navy realized the condition of his health, Admiral Farragut was granted the much needed furlough.

Leaving his squadron in charge of an efficient officer, he sailed north in November, 1864. As his flagship entered New York harbor, it was met by a committee of city officials and citizens. Enthusiastic crowds greeted him as he landed, and a reception in his honor was held at the custom-house.

A few days later, a committee of citizens sent him a request to make his home in New York. With this request came a gift of \$50,000. In December, Congress created for him the grade

of vice-admiral. All these honors were gratefully and modestly acknowledged by him.

In the spring of 1865 peace was declared, and Admiral Farragut went for a visit to Norfolk. He found that many of his old acquaintances still felt very unfriendly towards him for having taken up arms against the South. Although this pained him deeply, he said that he had never regretted having done his duty.

In 1866, the government gave him the title of Admiral. This title made him commander of the whole American navy. It was a rank created especially for him. The government could give him no higher honor.

In 1867, he was appointed commander of the European squadron. Without any request from him, the government sent permission for Mrs. Farragut to accompany him on this cruise. On June 28th, they sailed from New York on the steam frigate *Franklin*.

This foreign cruise was more like the triumphal progress of a king than the official visit of a naval commander. He dined with the emperor of



France and the queen of England. He visited the ports of Russia, Holland, and Belgium. He sailed again through the blue Mediterranean, visiting the places he had seen on his former cruise. A special excavation of the buried Pompeii was made for his benefit. At Malta, a grand reception was held in his honor.

But most of all, he enjoyed a visit to his father's Spanish birthplace. This was in the island of Minorca, just off the eastern coast of Spain.

He was to visit the little city on the day before Christmas. The news of his coming had spread rapidly to all parts of the island, and a general holiday had been proclaimed.

At every village on the way crowds of men and women came to meet him and bid him welcome. All along the route soldiers had been stationed to pay him honor, and give him any assistance that he might need.

Four miles from the city gates he was met by a large committee of citizens, and transferred to a handsome carriage.

The city walls, housetops, and balconies were

crowded with men, women, and children. One old man, with tears streaming down his face, shouted: "He is ours ! He is ours !"

The admiral was entertained at the mansion of one of the prominent citizens. A band of music played in the vestibule, while the people came in crowds.

Early the next day, surrounded by an excited throng, he was escorted to all the places of interest. They finally went to the great cathedral, where the organ pealed forth the American national airs.

This was the last place the admiral visited before his return to America. He landed in New York, November 10th, 1868.

The following summer, he made a trip to the Pacific coast, to visit the navy yard at Mares Island. You will remember that, years before, he had laid the foundations of this navy yard.

Returning from San Francisco to the East, he was taken very ill in Chicago. By careful nursing he was able to resume the journey. But he never regained his lost strength, and his health continued steadily to fail.

The following summer the Navy Department placed a steamer at his disposal, and with his family he visited Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

This was his last sea voyage. As the ship came into harbor, he arose from his sick bed at the sound of the salute being fired in his honor.

Dressed in full uniform, he went on deck. Looking up with a sad smile at his flag flying from the masthead, he said : “It would be well if I died *now* in harness.”

Shortly after his arrival he wandered on board a dismantled sloop, lying at the wharf. He looked about the ship, and, as he left her to go ashore, he said : “This is the last time I shall ever tread the deck of a man of war.”

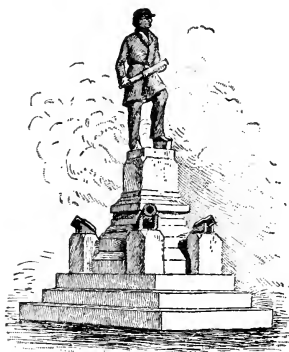
This proved to be true. On August 14th, 1870, surrounded by his family and loving friends, he died. He was sixty-nine years old.

The government sent a steam frigate to take his body to New York. On the day of his funeral, the whole city was in mourning. The buildings were draped in black. Bells were tolled and guns fired.

His body was laid in Woodlawn Cemetery. Heading the procession was General Grant, then the President of the United States. Following were many military and naval officers, and thousands of soldiers.

The government erected a bronze statue in his honor. This is in the national capital, in Farragut Square.

Thus ends the story of the life of America's first admiral, the story of a man who won fame and glory by constant effort for self-improvement and strict adherence to duty.



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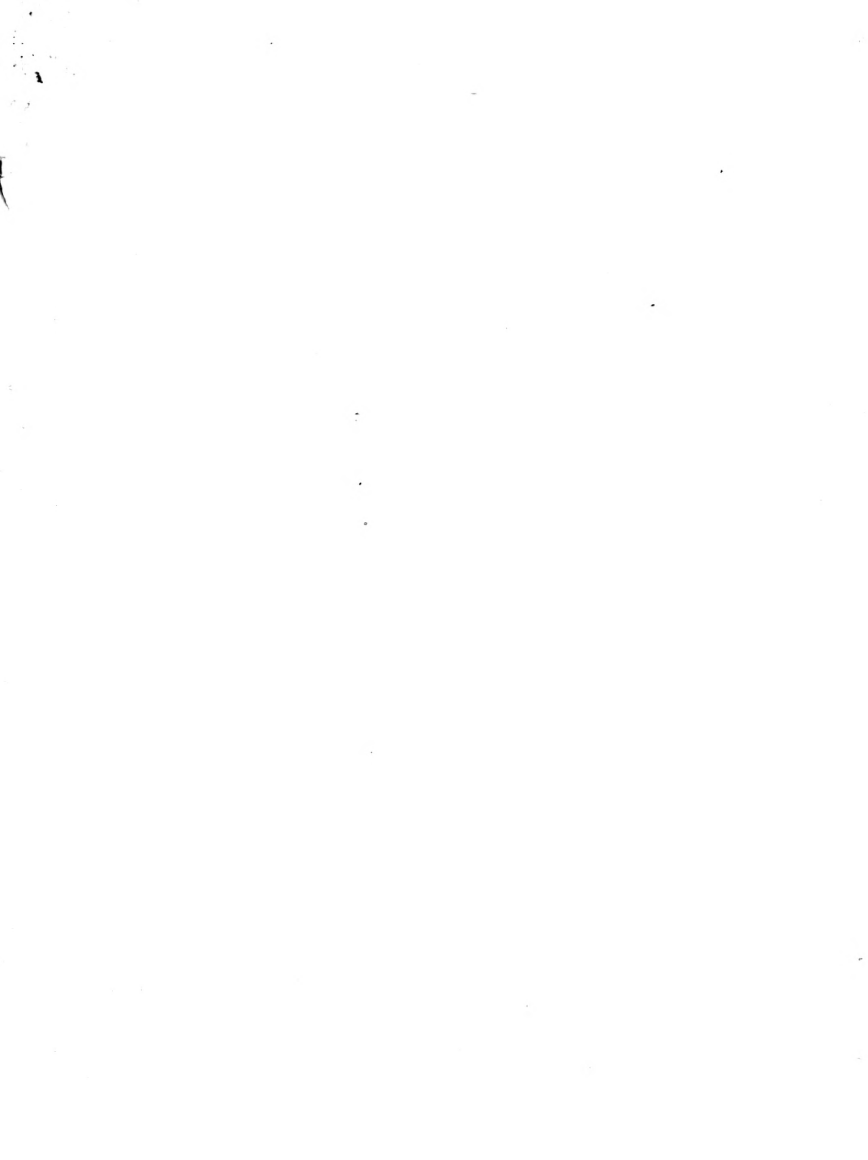
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